

Study Guide #12: The Pre-Advent Judgment

Introduction

The teaching that there's a process of judgment in heaven before the 2nd Coming of Jesus is a much-neglected Bible teaching. But it's implied in Revelation 22:12, where Jesus says that He will return to earth with His **“reward...to give to every one according to his works”** (NKJV). If He brings the reward with Him, then each case must have already been decided in heaven. This Study Guide examines this issue of the pre-advent judgment, what it's all about, and when it began in heaven.

Question #1: How does the prophecy of Daniel 8 initially begin?

Answer: Daniel 8's vision begins with a symbolic ram, representing Medo-Persia (v. 20), conquering other symbolic beasts (vv. 3-4). Then a male goat appears, representing Greece (v. 21), and conquers the ram. This is followed by a **“notable horn”** (v. 5) on the goat, representing **“the first king”** of Greece (NKJV, v. 21) being broken, and 4 other horns arising in its place (v. 8). History records that this notable horn was Alexander the Great, and that his 4 generals divided Alexander's conquered territory after his death.



Question #2: What is the focus of Daniel 8's prophetic vision?

Answer: Its focus is on a **“little horn”** that would arise **“in the latter time of their [the 4 horns] kingdom”** (vv. 24-25) and do many things (vv. 9-12). Verse 9 says that the little horn would come **“out of one of them”** (NKJV), referring either to **“the four winds of heaven”** (v. 8) or the **“four notable ones”** (horns, v. 8). Most scholars believe it's the **“four notable ones,”** but we believe it's the **“four winds of heaven”** for 2 reasons. *First*, the more recent location mentioned in relation to the little horn is **“the four winds of heaven,”** making it the more natural connection to the little horn. *Second*, after saying that the little horn becomes **“exceedingly great”** (v. 9), the text describes its activities as extending **“toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land.”** Since these are compass directions, it amounts to stating that the little horn came from another compass direction, which would be west or northwest. [NOTE: The **“Glorious Land”** is a reference to Jerusalem and/or Judea, as per similar language in Psalm 48:1-2, 106:24, Jeremiah 3:19, and Ezekiel 20:6, 15.] The overall weight of the evidence favors the conclusion that the little horn would arise from 1 of the 4 *winds* rather than from 1 of the 4 horns. At the very least, it makes it impossible to definitively prove that it would come from 1 of the 4 divisions of the former Greek Empire.

Question #3: What does the little horn represent in this prophecy?

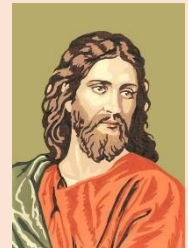
Answer: Daniel 8:9 says the little horn would become **“exceedingly great.”** This is comparable to the Medo-Persian ram (**“great,”** v. 4) and the Greek goat (**“very great,”** v. 8). The only political kingdom that was at least as great as Medo-Persia and Greece that came immediately after Greece was Rome, which defeated Egypt under Cleopatra in 30 B.C., the last major stronghold of the former Greek Empire. Therefore, the little horn is Rome. [NOTE: Both liberal and *most* conservative scholars identify the little horn as Antiochus IV, a ruler based in Syria who waged a war against the Jews in Palestine. He occupied Jerusalem and its Temple from 168-165 B.C. and desecrated it by placing idols to pagan gods there and offering a pig on the Altar of Burnt Offering. See the Appendix to this Study Guide for a more thorough explanation for why Antiochus IV doesn’t fulfill the little horn upon closer inspection.]

Question #4: What do “the host of heaven” and “stars” in Daniel 8:10 mean?

Answer: Daniel 8:10 reads, **“And it [little horn] grew up to the host of heaven; and it cast down some of the host and some of the stars to the ground, and trampled them”** (NKJV). The **“host of heaven”** sometimes refers to the multitudes of angels in heaven, while the word **“host”** (or “armies”) sometimes refers to God’s people on earth (Exodus 12:41). Symbolic **“stars”** can refer to angels (Job 38:7 in context; Revelation 12:4, 9) and sometimes to God’s people on earth (Deuteronomy 1:10; Daniel 12:3). Of course, the little horn couldn’t enter heaven, so it must refer to God’s people, as Daniel 8:24 confirms in this case when it says that the little horn would **“destroy the mighty, and also the holy people”** (NKJV). Rome certainly was guilty of persecuting God’s people.

Question #5: Who is “the Prince of the host” in Daniel 8:11?

Answer: In Daniel 8:25, this Prince is identified as **“the Prince of princes”** (NKJV), implying that he may be a divine being. Joshua 5:13-14 confirms this because Joshua met and worshiped a being calling Himself **“Commander of the army of the Lord”** (v. 14, NKJV), and he wasn’t rebuked for doing it. [NOTE: The Hebrew word for **“Commander”** is from the same word translated as **“Prince”** in Daniel 8:11, and the Hebrew word for **“army”** is the same word translated **“host”** in Daniel 8:11.] Since this divine Prince has His own sanctuary, He must be the pre-incarnate Jesus, whom the book of Hebrews teaches is now ministering in His sanctuary in heaven (Hebrews 7:17, 23-27; 8:1-2; 9:11-12).



Question #6: According to Daniel 8:11, what does the little horn do?

Answer: **“He even exalted himself as high as the Prince of the host; and by him the daily sacrifices were taken away...”** (NKJV). The little horn dares to challenge Jesus by exalting himself to His status or authority. And he does so by taking the **“daily sacrifices”** from Jesus. *First*, please note that there’s *no* Hebrew word for **“sacrifices;”** it was added by the translators because eventually the word for **“daily”** (or “continual”) did refer to the **“daily”** (or “continual”) sacrifices in the Temple. But there’s no evidence that this extended meaning applied when Daniel wrote his book. Moreover, there are no sacrifices, daily or otherwise, in the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, the **“daily”** must refer to all of the daily or continual

activities except the animal sacrifices which were done in association with the Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary. *Second*, the word “by” should be translated as “from” instead, which nearly all modern translations do, because the nearest word to “him” that it could refer to is “**Prince**,” and Jesus wouldn’t take away anything from Himself. Therefore, Daniel 8:11 is teaching that the little horn will take away Jesus’ ongoing work for His people in the heavenly sanctuary. Obviously, it can’t physically prevent Jesus from doing this work in heaven. But he can obscure that work through a religious system that undermines Jesus as our High Priest. It’s this ongoing work of Jesus that the little horn would take away “from” Jesus.

Question #7: Did Rome do what Daniel 8:11 says the little horn would do?

Answer: Clearly, verse 11 represents a transition point in the prophecy because now the little horn’s work is explicitly a *religious* assault on the Christian Jesus as our High Priest. This pagan Rome didn’t do. The Roman Empire didn’t specifically and directly seek to undermine Christian theology but only to persecute Christianity in general. Yet the symbol of the little horn is still used in verse 11. So what explicitly religious power under the umbrella of Rome (using the same symbol for Rome) sought to explicitly undermine Jesus as our High Priest by substituting its own system of intercession and priests? Historically, this must be a reference to Papal Rome, the system of the Roman Catholic Church. [Review under Question #6.]

Question #8: What else would the little horn do?

Answer: According to Daniel 8:11, the little horn would be responsible for the fact that “**the place of His [Jesus’] sanctuary was cast down**” (NKJV). Since the little horn couldn’t physically enter heaven to “**cast down**” the “**place of His sanctuary**,” it must mean that it would figuratively cast it down through his efforts to substitute human mediators and works. In verse 12, the “**army [that] was given over to the horn to oppose the daily sacrifices**” must represent its group of priests who substitute themselves as allegedly official representatives of Jesus to forgive sins, to offer the “sacrifice” of the mass, and to point people to various saints to act as supposed mediators between the people and God. These are the important ways in which that Church takes away the “**daily**” work of Jesus—and it robs Jesus of the glory that is due to Him and Him alone! This is also what verse 12 means when it says that the little horn and its army “**cast truth down to the ground**”—which is a parallel statement to verse 11’s “**cast down the place of His sanctuary**.” In pointing away from Jesus’ work as our only priest by substituting a human priesthood and really an entire Church as the Antichrist (“in place of Christ”), the little horn casts the truth about the heavenly sanctuary to the ground.



Jesus at the Altar of Incense

Question #9: What is God’s response to the little horn’s activities?

Answer: Read Daniel 8:13-14. God’s ultimate response is that “**the sanctuary shall be cleansed**” (v. 14, NKJV). There are 2 *primary* types of English translations for that clause: (1) “cleansed” or (2) “restored,” or close variations of those words. A good translation must (a) be based on an actual dictionary definition of the root word or an extended meaning of that word, *and* (b) fit the context in which the word is used. All Hebrew lexicons (dictionaries) agree that the essential meaning of the Hebrew verb in Daniel 8:14 is

“to be just,” to be right,” or “to be righteous.” The word is also steeped in the context of God’s Law as the standard for judging what is just, right, or righteous. So there’s often both a moral and a legal context for this word. In the legal context, a person who goes through a courtroom trial (a legal process) and receives a verdict of “not guilty” is said to be “declared” just, right, or righteous in the eyes of the law. Such a person is also “justified” or “vindicated.” That person is also “restored” to his previous state in society. Moreover, the process of “cleansing” is also a process of restoration. Therefore, it would *seem* that all of these English words *might* be appropriate translations in Daniel 8:14.

Question #10: Do all of the words discussed under Question #9 fit the context?

Answer: Both words—“cleansed” and “restored”—reminds anyone familiar with the Old Testament of the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), an annual fall Hebrew festival in which the earthly sanctuary was symbolically cleansed and thus restored by a final end-of-year purging of the people’s forgiven sins. All through the year, the priest would sprinkle some of the sacrificial blood on the Altar of Burnt Offering (Leviticus 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, 13) and in the Holy Place of the sanctuary (Leviticus 4:6, 17), signifying that the forgiven sins were transferred to that sanctuary. Then on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would take some sacrificial blood and sprinkle some of it in the Most Holy Place (Leviticus 16:14-15), the Holy Place (Leviticus 16:15-16), and finally the Altar of Burnt Offering (Leviticus 16:18-19). This was a solemn Judgment Day because there was a separation among those claiming to belong to God. [NOTE: Non-Israelites didn’t go through this judgment process.] Those who humbled themselves on that day would pass the judgment and be allowed to remain part of the covenant people for another year. Those who didn’t humble themselves would be “**cut off**” from the people of God.



Jesus in the Most Holy Place

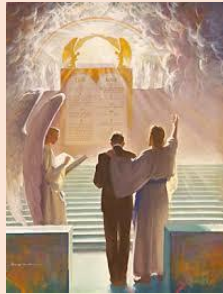
We can see that both words, then, do indeed fit the context of Daniel 8. The little horn has obscured the continual work of Jesus as our High Priest. But the end-time Day of Atonement judgment will demonstrate that Jesus’ continual mediating work (Hebrews 7:25) in the heavenly sanctuary was indeed the just and perfect way that God dealt with the sin problem. Critics usually point out that the Hebrew verb for “**cleansed**” (or “restored”) in Daniel 8:14 isn’t the same word used in Leviticus 16. Although true, the context in Daniel 8 is also somewhat broader than that in Leviticus 16 because it’s also the “**truth**” about the heavenly sanctuary that will be restored. [NOTE: That’s the reason we believe that, while “**cleansed**” is an appropriate translation, “restored” is probably the better one, given the broader context in Daniel 8.]

Question #11: Is there any additional evidence in Daniel 8 that alludes to the Day of Atonement imagery?

Answer: Yes. *First*, please note that the beasts in Daniel 7 are all unclean animals, but the ram and goat in Daniel 8 are both clean animals (according to Leviticus 11). Moreover, the only time in Scripture that both a ram and a goat are seen together in a sanctuary context is on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). Surely that can’t be a coincidence. *Second*, note the parallelism between the visions of Daniel 7 and 8:

Daniel 7

Babylon (or Neo-Babylonia)
Medo-Persia
Greece
Rome
Little Horn (Papal Rome)
Judgment scene (7:13, 21-22, 26)
Demise of the Little Horn (7:26)



Heavenly Judgment
Scene

Daniel 8

Medo-Persia
Greece
Rome (little horn in vv. 9-10)
Little Horn (Papal Rome in vv. 11-12)
Cleansing/Restoring of the sanctuary (v. 14)
Demise of the Little Horn (v. 25)

Babylon isn't represented in Daniel 8 because its time on the world stage was coming to an end when the vision was given (see Daniel 8:1; cf. Daniel 5:30-31). You can see that the cleansing or restoring of the sanctuary in Daniel 8 is parallel with the Heavenly Judgment scene in Daniel 7. We should note that in Daniel 7, the judgment scene is followed by Jesus as the Son of Man (7:13) being given His everlasting kingdom (7:14). In other words, it's a judgment that occurs in heaven just before the 2nd Coming of Jesus. It's also investigative in nature because it involves books of records (Daniel 7:10). Therefore, God's answer to the little horn is the Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment.

Question #12: After what period of time will the pre-advent judgment begin?

Answer: “For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” (Daniel 8:14, NKJV). The Hebrew literally reads 2,300 “**evenings-mornings.**” More liberal scholars view this as a reference to 2,300 animal sacrifices at the sanctuary. With both a morning and an evening sacrifice, the number is divided in half to mean 1,150 literal days. However, remember that a Hebrew word for “**sacrifices**” isn't in the Hebrew text. Also, those 2 daily sacrifices are always referred to as the morning and evening sacrifices, not the evening and morning sacrifices (I Chronicles 16:40; II Chronicles 2:4; 13:11; 31:3; Ezra 3:3). Furthermore, the 2 sacrifices each day were viewed as a single unit called a “**continual burnt offering**” (singular, Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28:3-4). The best way to understand the term “**evenings-mornings**” is as a reference to the days of Creation Week in Genesis 1, where each day was said to be “**the evening and the morning**” (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31).

Question #13: Are those 2,300 literal *days* or 2,300 literal *years*?

Answer: In Daniel 8:13, a question begins with “**How long will the vision be...?**” (NKJV). But the literal Hebrew reads, “**Until when the vision...?**”. So the question was not how long the little horn would be active, but when the entire vision's prophecy would end. The entire vision begins with the conquering work of the Medo-Persian ram (Daniel 8:3-4, 20). According to verse 17, the vision extends to “**the time of the end,**” which in Daniel is a period of time near the end of history in which several events occur, culminating in world history's greatest time of trouble and a resurrection (11:40-12:3). This means that the 2,300 days must be symbolic of a much longer time period than 2,300 literal days. See Explorer III, Study Guides #4 and #8 for evidence that the only way that a symbolic day is used to represent a specific period

of longer time in Scripture is for a literal year. This year-day principle means that the 2,300 days is literally 2,300 years.

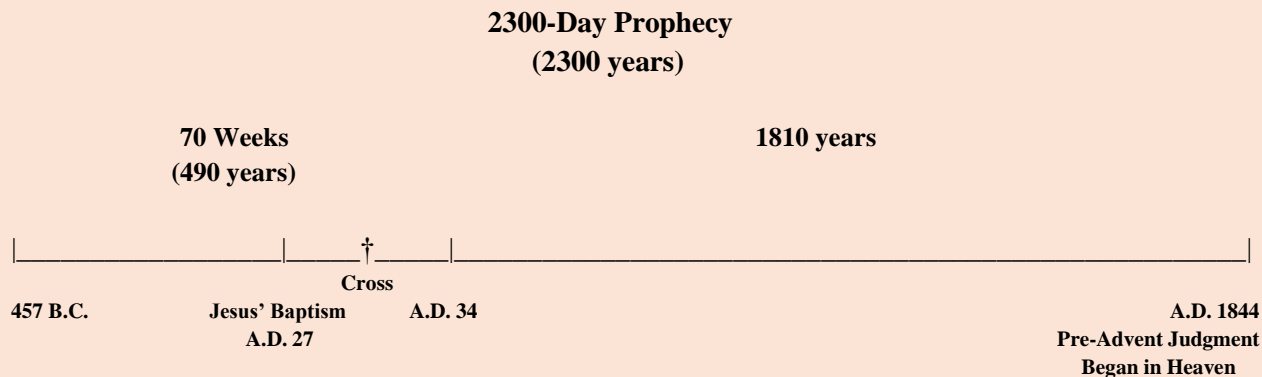
Question #14: So exactly when does the 2,300 years begin and end?

Answer: The only “answer” to this question in Daniel 8 is the clue given under Question #13 that the 2,300 days/years must begin during the Medo-Persian period of dominance. But a comparison of Daniel 8 with Daniel 9 does offer us another clue. The normal Hebrew word for “**vision**” appears in Daniel 8:1-2, 13, 15, and 26 (2nd occurrence). But in verses 16, 26 (1st occurrence), and 27, the word for “**vision**” literally means “appearance.” [NOTE: The same Hebrew word is translated “**appearance**” in the NKJV of v. 15.] That means the major part of the total vision that Daniel didn’t understand was the “**appearance**” of the 2 heavenly beings (presumably angels) discussing the time of the 2,300 days (v. 27). In Daniel 9:23, Gabriel came to explain to him the “**appearance**.” There had been no regular vision or “appearance” since Daniel 8. And in Daniel 9:24, Gabriel explains about the *time* of the 70 weeks. Thus, there’s a connection between the 2,300 days of Daniel 8 and the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.

Question #15: What is the connection between the 2,300 days and the 70 weeks?

Answer: Daniel 9:24 declares that “**Seventy weeks are determined...**” (NKJV) for several things to get done. The Hebrew verb for “**are determined**” had the primary meaning of “cut off” even as late as the Jewish Mishnah several hundred years later. Its meaning of “**determined**” was a secondary, extended meaning. Therefore, we can be certain that in Daniel’s day its primary meaning was “cut off.” Time can only be “cut off” from a longer period of time. Given the connections discovered under Question #14, the 70 weeks (490 years) must be “cut off” from the 2,300 days (2,300 years). The 70 weeks couldn’t be “cut off” at the end of the 2,300 days because that would put the events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus in “**the time of the end.**” [NOTE: See under Question #13 for information on “the time of the end.”]

From Explorer III, Study Guide #4 we learn that the 70 Weeks prophecy began officially in 457 B.C. The rest is a simple matter of math. $2,300 - 457 \text{ B.C.} = \text{A.D. } 1843 + 1$ (because there’s no zero year) = A.D. 1844. Therefore, we conclude that the Pre-Advent Judgment—the anti-typical Day of Atonement—began in heaven in 1844.



Appendix—Antiochus IV

There are at least 6 good reasons why Antiochus IV cannot be the little horn of Daniel 8. They are summarized in this appendix to Study Guide #12:

- *First*, the comparative greatness of the little horn with respect to the Persian ram and the Greek goat doesn't describe Antiochus IV, who was infinitely less great or powerful than either of those empires. See Daniel 8:4, 8-9.
- *Second*, he didn't match the military activities of the little horn, which **"grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east, and toward the Glorious Land"** (Daniel 8:9, NKJV). Antiochus had some success against Egypt in the south, but Roman diplomacy turned him back in 168 B.C. It was Antiochus III who had greater military success than he did. In fact, the Jews successfully harassed Antiochus IV's forces and eventually defeated them in late 164 B.C. (I Maccabees 3:57; 4:29; 5:52). Thus, Antiochus IV ruled only one portion of the post Alexander the Great empire for about 11 years and with only minor success.
- *Third*, Antiochus IV's activities in Jerusalem don't line up well with the description of the little horn when you examine them closely. It's true that he desecrated the Temple there. But he didn't attack the literal foundation even if one interpreted this prophecy as pertaining to the Jerusalem Temple (Daniel 8:11). Nor did he specifically **"cast truth down"** (Daniel 8:12, NKJV).
- *Fourth*, his rise to power doesn't match the description of the time period that the little horn is said to have arisen **"in the latter time"** of the divided Greek kingdom (Daniel 8:23). Instead, he rose to power closer to the middle of that era, for the Seleucid dynasty officially began in 311 B.C. and lasted until 65 B.C., consisting of more than 20 different rulers. Antiochus IV was the 8th in line, placing him in the 1st half of the dynasty. Measured by the dates of his rule (175-164 B.C.), he would more accurately be in the middle of the dynasty, with less than 20 years from the exact middle.
- *Fifth*, Antiochus IV's activities in and around Jerusalem don't match the period of either 2,300 literal days or 1,150 literal days (even assuming literal days are meant). Even regarding the time he controlled the Jerusalem Temple itself, I Maccabees 1:54, 59 and 4:52, 54 says this period lasted for just 3 years—or 3 years and 10 days if you count the 1st 10 days of setting up the pagan idol in the Temple before the actual pagan sacrifices began. This was well short of even 1,150 days.
- *Sixth*, there was nothing unusual about the death of Antiochus IV. But Daniel 8:25 states that the end of the little horn would come **"without human means"** (NKJV). Lamentations 4:6 and II Corinthians 5:1 indicate that events or objects made without hands are those things which God Himself does without human assistance. Also, with the establishment of God's kingdom in Daniel 2:34, 44-45, such events tend to be rather spectacular in nature. Maccabees 6:8-17 seems to assign the death of Antiochus IV to natural causes in 164 B.C.